

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD
DOCKET NO.

IN RE:

19R PARK AVENUE,
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

**IMPACT STATEMENT OF THE HOUSING CORPORATION OF
ARLINGTON PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 11, SECTION 11.06 AND
STATEMENT ADDRESSING SPECIAL PERMIT CRITERIA SET OUT
IN ARTICLE 10, SECTION 10.11(a) OF THE ARLINGTON ZONING BYLAW**

I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 11.06(d)(5) of Article 11 and Article 10, Section 10.11(a) of the Arlington Zoning Bylaw, the Housing Corporation of Arlington submits its impact statement and statement as to the satisfaction of the special permit criteria in connection with its request for the issuance of a special permit for the project proposed for 19R Park Avenue, Arlington, MA (hereinafter referred to as the "Bylaw," "HCA" and the "Property", respectively).

The project proposed by the HCA for this 38,430 square foot site consists of thirty-four (34) new residential units of affordable housing. As the Board is aware, the Property has long been a vacant, overgrown and unkempt site. The Property, as detailed below, will require environmental remediation to address pollutants on the Property.

The Property is in an R-7 zoning district, which permits the construction of residential units with a special permit, subject to environmental design review. The parcel is located behind the CITGO Station at the intersection of Park Avenue and Lowell Street in Arlington and extends to the Minuteman Bike Path, running horizontally along the bike path for several hundred feet.

HCA seeks relief for the following purposes:

1. To construct thirty-four (34) units of multifamily rental units affordable to households earning 60% or less of the area median income.
2. Relief from the dimensional and density regulations.
3. Relief from the off-street parking requirements.

II. SPECIAL PERMIT CRITERIA

1. Use Requested

The use requested, multi-family apartment-type use, is listed in the table of Use Regulations by special permit in an R-7 zoning district. See Article 5, Section 5.04, paragraph 1.05.

2. Public Convenience or Welfare

As specifically provided in Section 11.08(a) of the Bylaw, the use proposed by the HCA is, in fact, a use determined by the Town of Arlington that is essential and desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

3. Pedestrian Safety and Traffic

The proposed use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety. HCA respectfully suggests that the proposed use is the least traffic intensive use for the Property.

4. Municipal Systems

The proposed project on this .880 of an acre, will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety or the general welfare.

5. Article 11, Section 11.06, Environmental Design Review

The proposed project is subject to environmental design review.

a. Preservation of Landscape

As depicted in the photographs of the existing conditions submitted by the HCA, there is virtually no landscape to preserve on the Property. The Property is a blighted site with overgrown and unsightly vegetation.

HCA proposes a landscape plan that will greatly enhance, beautify and improve the Property. See the proposed landscape plan submitted by the HCA.

b. Relation of Proposed Residential Buildings to Neighborhood Environment

The residential buildings proposed will consist of two (2) multifamily buildings. The building to be constructed on Lot B on the plans submitted is intended to be a four-story structure serviced by an elevator and consisting of 28 units. The other building will be a six unit three-story walkup.

The total unit mix will be fifteen (15) one-bedroom units, fourteen (14) two-bedroom units and five (5) three-bedroom units.

The proposed residential units are in harmony with the neighborhood, which includes numerous commercial and industrial-type uses, homes and apartment-style buildings, including residential units, to be constructed by the HCA at 20 Westminster Avenue and neighboring homes, including Colonial Village.

c. Open Space and Site Remediation

The proposed project will enhance and improve the open space on the Property and has been designed to maximize its utility and encourage resident interaction.

Of significance, though some lead stabilization was completed by the Seller, the Property, which is contaminated with pcps, lead, arsenic and vocs, will be remediated by the HCA.

HCA has commissioned and completed Phase I and II environmental reports. The environmental team has defined the scope of the remediation, which includes removal of contaminated soil and encapsulation of a portion of the Property.

HCA has engaged GEI Environmental Consultants, a national environmental consulting firm, to perform the geotechnical and remediation work. All of the remediation work will be done in accordance with DEP requirements.

The remediation of this blighted site and construction of affordable rental units will substantially benefit the Town.

d. Site Circulation

The Property will, as detailed on the plans submitted, be accessed by a driveway from Lowell Street approximately one hundred (100) feet from the intersection of Lowell Street and Park Avenue. The pedestrian walkways and drive aisles have been designed to increase social interaction, including utilization of the Minuteman Bike Path.

e. Surface Water Drainage

Site surface waters will drain onsite into catch basins and an underground drainage system and will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system.

The onsite drainage system will be designed to collect runoff at intervals such that water runoff will neither obstruct the flow of vehicles or pedestrian traffic nor create puddles in paved areas.

f. Utility Service

All utility services, including electric, telephone and cable television shall be installed underground.

g. Signage

The Property will include signage identifying the residential development and wayfaring signage in the drive aisles.

h. Safety

The project has been designed to facilitate building evacuation as required by the Massachusetts Building Code and maximum accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment.

i. Heritage

This site has long been a contaminated and blighted Property. The proposed project is in keeping with Arlington's heritage, provides for the cleanup of a contaminated site and ensures the construction of an attractive and appropriate residential development of affordable housing.

j. Microclimate

The materials and mechanical equipment to be installed will be of the quality that minimize noise.

k. Sustainable Building and Site Design

The Property is located in an R-7 zoning district. The R-7 zoning district is for the "predominant use" as apartments up to five stories in height. Pursuant to Article 5, Section 5.04, apartment houses are permitted in an R-7 District by special permit.

The minimum lot size required in an R-7 District is 20,000 square feet. The Property consists of 38,430 square feet and is well in excess of the minimum lot size required.

The frontage required is 100 feet. The frontage for this Property is 96.9. Though it is only 3.1 feet short, the HCA respectfully suggests that the Property is a prior nonconforming lot and as such is grandfathered. The plain language of M.G.L. c.40A, §6, grants a perpetual exemption from increased local zoning requirements for certain lots that were once buildable under

local bylaws. The purpose of this statute, exempting certain lots from increased zoning restrictions, is to protect a once valued lot from being rendered unbuildable. All uses in an R-7 zoning district require 100 feet of frontage. If this lot were not deemed a prior nonconforming lot, nothing could be constructed on it.

The project as proposed is less than the permitted number of stories and height permitted in an R-7 District.

The Property will contain the landscaped and usable area required by the Arlington Zoning Bylaw.

The project on this Property is in keeping with Section 11.08 of the Arlington Zoning Bylaw. The project will promote the public health, safety and welfare of our Town by expanding the affordable residential inventory by thirty-four (34) units and transforming a blighted/contaminated site into necessary affordable housing stock.

As permitted by Article 8, Sections 8.01(a), 8.12(a)(10) and Article 11.08(e)(1), the Arlington Redevelopment Board has the ability to reduce the number of parking spaces required by this project collectively by 55%.

6. The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health, morals, or welfare. Indeed, the project will be a substantial improvement of this blighted and environmentally contaminated site.

7. The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of that particular use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood. The immediate neighborhood consists of retail, commercial and industrial uses and a mix of single and two families and apartment-style developments. The project will not, by its addition to the neighborhood, cause an excess of residential use that would be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood.

The need for affordable housing in Arlington has increased significantly as housing prices and rents have skyrocketed in recent years. Media sources have reported that rents have increased 14% in Arlington in 2012 and again in 2015. Another indication of the need for affordable housing is the number of applications received by the HCA. In 2013, 183 Arlington households completed an HCA application for affordable housing hoping to obtain a unit in HCA's 93 unit portfolio. HCA now has over 1,000 households on its waiting list. The thirty-four (34) units proposed will help the escalating demand for affordable housing.



Respectfully submitted,

Mary Winstanley O'Connor, counsel for the
Housing Corporation of Arlington